

NEWS RELEASE

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SBA HONORS SMALL BUSINESS CONTRIBUTIONS TO PRESIDENT'S WELFARE-TO-WORK INITIATIVE

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration is honoring three individuals from California, Kansas and Maine for their contributions to the Clinton-Gore administration's Welfare-to-Work Initiative.

The awards, to be announced today at the opening of national Small Business Week, pay tribute to the crucial role played by the nation's small businesses in helping welfare recipients move into the work force.

“Welfare-to-Work is an extraordinary success story and it couldn't have happened without thousands of job offers made to welfare recipients by small business owners throughout the country,” SBA Administrator Aída Alvarez said. **“Small business is truly the ‘work’ side of the welfare-to-work equation. Our award recipients have made a commitment to putting people to work, helping them become self sufficient in their communities.”**

The recipients of the SBA's 1999 Welfare-to-Work Awards are: small business owner George T. Johnson of Wichita, Kan.; businesswoman Gale Walker of San Diego, Calif.; and Richard C. Petersen, president of Employment Trust, Inc. in Portland, Maine.

The awardees are in Washington this week as part of the 36th annual Small Business Week, May 23-29. The weeklong celebration includes award ceremonies, exhibits, and discussions of small business issues.

- **George T. Johnson, president and CEO of Diversified Educational Training and Manufacturing Company, Inc. (DETAMC), is the *Welfare-to-Work Small Business Person of the Year* for his efforts to provide jobs for disadvantaged and disabled workers.**

After a successful military career, Mr. Johnson founded DETAMC in 1992 as a way to reach out to “worthwhile people who had fallen through the cracks.” DETAMC trains welfare recipients in tool maintenance, repair and carpentry skills. The firm also provides basic academic instruction to help workers obtain a GED. The company contracts with local industries, including Wichita's aircraft manufacturing companies, to provide meaningful employment to individuals upon completion of their training. In 1988, Mr. Johnson started a new housing program to rehabilitate city-owned property which is repaired by DETMAC trained workers and sold to low and moderate-income residents.

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Mr. Johnson serves on numerous business-related boards and committees and has received many honors for his work including the NAACP's Theo Cribbs Man of the Year award.

- **Gale Walker, recipient of the *Welfare-to-Work Entrepreneur of the Year* award, is director of the Children of the Rainbow Daycare Center and Rainbow Arts Project.**

A former welfare recipient herself, Ms. Walker founded the Children of the Rainbow Daycare Center and Rainbow Arts Project in 1990 to help other low- and moderate-income families juggle the demands of children, school and work. The center provides childcare services 24 hours a day to children of all ages and includes an infants and toddlers program, an accredited pre-school, and before and after school programs. Ms. Walker's center also provides services to needy families through subcontracts with agencies such as the YMCA and Children's Home Society. She recently signed an agreement with a local military housing location to provide childcare to children of Navy personnel.

- **Richard C. Petersen, president of Employment Trust, Inc. (ETI) based in Portland, Maine, is the *Welfare-to Work SBA Associate of the Year*. ETI provides employment placement services to people with barriers to employment due to economic disadvantage or disability.**

Mr. Peterson has been involved in the field of workforce development for people with disabilities for nearly thirty years. In 1993, he and two colleagues founded ETI, which has grown from four employees to 23 with revenues of nearly \$1 million. ETI personnel work extensively with job seekers in the workplace to give them training support and a longer "learning curve" as they grow into their positions. Other services offered by ETI include vocational evaluation and testing, job development, job shadowing and intensive post placement follow-up and monitoring support.

Mr. Petersen works closely with Coastal Enterprises, Inc., one of the SBA's Small Business Development Centers, to operate a federally funded welfare-to-work POWER Project. Mr. Petersen is also a consultant to the Enterprise Foundation's Community Employment Alliance.

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*For more information on Small Business Week and a complete list of award winners, visit the SBA's Small Business Week Internet site at <http://smallbusinesssuccess.sba.gov>. Additional information about the SBA's Welfare-to-Work program is available at: www.sba.gov/w2w. Or call the **SBA Answer Desk** at **1-800-U-ASK-SBA**.*

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